

2014 Whitley Awards

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Two Whitley medals winners

This year a Whitley Medal has been awarded for each of two very substantial contributions to Australian zoological literature. They are substantial not only in size but also in scientific impact, illustration and design.

The winners are Marion Anstis for her definitive *Tadpoles and Frogs of Australia* published by New Holland and Adam Slipinski and Hermes Escalona for *Australian Longhorn Beetles (Coleoptera; Cerambycidae) Vol.1* published by ABRS and CSIRO Publishing

The Royal Zoological Society of NSW presented the winners of the 2014 Whitley Awards at a ceremony

at The Australian Museum in Sydney on Friday 12 September 2014.

The Awards, first presented in 1979, are a tribute to Gilbert Whitley (1903-1975 – the Curator of Fishes at The Australian Museum from 1922 to 1964. For many years, Whitley was also the editor of the Society's publications and a very active member of the RZS Council.

The Whitley Awards are for outstanding publications that promote Australasian fauna and especially its conservation. The Whitley Medal and Special Commendation are the most sought after prizes in Australian zoological publishing.

Tadpoles and Frogs of Australia by Marion Anstis is the culmination of her passion for amphibians from early childhood. Throughout the time Marion worked as a music teacher, the germ of her passion was coming to the surface. Signs of her metamorphosis were manifest in the publication of a number of scientific papers from the early seventies. *Tadpoles of South-eastern Australia* burst on a generally unsuspecting zoological public in 2002. This gained the Whitley Medal for that year. The publication of the present and very much expanded volume gained Marion a PhD from Newcastle University. Thus Marion has the unique distinction of being awarded two Whitley Medals. To quote a small section from the Foreword by Angus Martin: "This is, in my view, the most comprehensive and thorough treatment of a continental frog fauna that there ever has been".

Noel Tait

On behalf of the Whitley Awards Committee.

The first of a planned three-volume treatise *Australian Longhorn Beetles (Coleoptera; Cerambycidae) Vol.1.* by Adam Slipinski and Hermes Escalona takes on the daunting task of providing a taxonomic review of the beetle family Cerambycidae within Australia. Beetles are the most biodiverse group of animals on Earth today and Cerambycidae is up there amongst the largest families of beetles. This volume provides a definitive account of the biology, phylogeny and morphology of adults and larvae and so sets the scene for the taxonomic treatment of the 1,400 species classified into 300 genera of Australian cerambycids. As evidence that the longhorn beetles are in good taxonomic hands, Adam Slipinski was awarded the Whitley Certificate of Commendation in Systematic Zoology for *Australian Ladybird Beetles (Coleoptera: Coccinellidae): Their Biology and Classification*.

Noel Tait

On behalf of the Whitley Awards Committee.

Below is a transcript of the Whitley Medal presentations delivered at the Whitley Award ceremony.

Tadpoles and Frogs of Australia

I have to confess up front that I have a personal interest in this book and am really pleased to be able to present the Whitley Medal in recognition of its excellence.

In order to win a Whitley Medal, a publication has to not only be good and accurate and up to date, but also it has to add a new facet to Australasian zoology. Consider the task confronting Marion Anstis when setting out to do the work for this book. The task is to find every frog species in Australia, to find it when it is breeding and to locate the eggs and juveniles, to record detailed information about developmental changes, body colour and morphology, diet and other pertinent facts. Photograph the various stages and collate this information in such a way that it becomes accessible to biologists who work on frogs and tadpoles.

The enormity of this task is best realised if you simply consider what conditions are like when frogs breed. In central Australia, many frog species do not breed every year and may only breed after those rare inland floods. Yes the frogs come out, but the roads also go out. The land turns

to slosh and sticky mud. Somewhere out in the vastness of the land are the eggs and tadpoles that you are looking for.

The significance of this achievement was recently best epitomised by Professor Ron Altig from Mississippi State University who came to Australia to attend the book launch of *Tadpoles and Frogs of Australia*. Ron is "Mr Tadpole" of the world. He has been working on tadpoles for over 35 years and is the most knowledgeable man when it comes to frogs and tadpoles. He came to Australia for the launch because he wanted to meet Marion face to face - he wanted to see what sort of person would attempt this. He couldn't believe that anyone could actually do this, especially in Australia, where support and back-ups are in short supply. Ron admitted afterwards that he was jealous of Marion's achievements because he been trying for the last 35 years to do a tadpole guide for the United States and has not been able to do it.

How did Marion come to write this book? Not surprisingly, she did not set out to describe all of Australians frogs and tadpoles as her initial aim. Marion was a school teacher and has a passion for frogs. Like many others with this passion, she joined the various herpetological societies and clubs and gained valuable field experience through

them. Her first major book was *Tadpoles of South-eastern Australia* published in 2002, and which won her a Whitley Medal. It was hailed as a breakthrough publication as the prevailing view till then was that all tadpoles were the same. She proved that they were not -tadpoles are as unique as the adult frog.

Having made such a great contribution, Marion might have stopped there, but the bug was in her blood now. Could she do something similar for the much more poorly known frogs and tadpoles of northern Australia? And what about Western Australia?

Two events conspired to force the decision to press on with the quest for more species of frogs. First, she retired from teaching; second, she enrolled in a PhD at the University of Newcastle. Now she had committed herself to see this through.

To achieve the aim, Marion spread the word widely that she was chasing frogs and tadpoles everywhere in Australia. The relatively small world of field biologists working in Australia rallied to her cry and she was taken to remote and nameless parts of the country with hairy and wild-eyed biologists in the hope of finding never-before seen frogs and tadpoles. Along the way she had many adventures. She purchased a caravan to provide, at least some, of life's luxuries while on the road.

Marion has to develop new photographic skills as well as editing skills. She was determined to do as much of the work on this book as she could.

Eventually she came to a point where she knew that she would fulfil her task. But it is not good enough merely to collect the data, it needs to be accessible for the biologists and especially field workers to use. This is where Reed New Holland came to the party. They agreed to publish the book, realising that it would be large, expensive and appeal to a limited audience. High quality colour production would be needed for the many photographs showing the developmental changes in the tadpoles and frogs. Fortunately, Taronga Zoo and The Frog and Tadpole Study Group of New South Wales decided to contribute towards the production costs so that the retail price could be reduced and the book more affordable.

You cannot underestimate Marion's achievement. She, like me, grew up with Harold Cogger's *Reptiles and Amphibians of Australia* as her bible. Hal Cogger was one who continually encouraged Marion with her work and was an inspiration for her to keep going. Marion may not have written the Australian frog bible, but she has certainly produced the New Testament, which will sit alongside copies of Cogger on bookshelves or in biologists' backpacks.

Every Australia with an interest in natural history is forever indebted to Marion, to Reed New Holland and to the army of helpers who made this book possible.

I congratulate Marion and Reed New Holland and have great pleasure in presenting her with the Whitley Medal 2014.

Arthur White

Ecological Consultant

Australian Longhorn Beetles (Coleoptera: Cerambycidae) Volume 1

Longhorn beetles are large, colourful and numerous enough to be popular with amateur collectors, but the group also includes serious pests of timber and a few useful biocontrol agents. In Australia, there are approximately 1400 described species in 300 genera.

Slipinski & Escalona provide a comprehensive introduction to the morphology, classification and biology of longhorn beetles, keys to adults and larvae of the subfamilies, a key to the 74 Australian genera of *Lamiinae* and then a synoptic couple of pages for each genus. The book is profusely and beautifully illustrated (almost half the pages are plates), with detailed anatomical studies but also photographs of more than 400 types. But it is not just a pretty book, it contains serious taxonomy, with 75 genera and 13 species synonymised and 3 new genera described.

This is the best taxonomic treatment of longhorn beetles I have seen, from anywhere in the world. While the number of genera has been drastically halved, which I thoroughly approve of, the authors are careful to note where further study is needed. This is reasonable in a group where many genera are widespread outside Australia.

The book is a great testament to the worth of the Australian Biological Resources Study (ABRS), which funded the project and whose 40th birthday is acknowledged on the spine. Additional publication funds were provided by the federal Department of Agriculture.

The book is a wonderful achievement for the authors, backers and publisher and I eagerly look forward to the next two volume.

Chris Reid

The Australian Museum

Whitley Special Commendation Award to Denis Saunders

Denis Saunders was awarded the Special Commendation for his outstanding contributions to the promotion of Australian Fauna and its conservation. Denis was with CSIRO Wildlife Research and successor divisions from 1968 until 2002 and is still active in the field. He has carried out ornithological research over the last half century.

Noel Tait Chairman of the Whitley Awards Committee put forward Denis Saunders name and it was unanimously approved by the RZS NSW council.

Denis Saunders – 2014 Whitley Special Commendation Award

Denis Saunders recently sent one of us (DL) an email saying: "Noel Tait contacted me last month to tell me that 'the Council of the Royal Zoological Society of NSW has proposed that you be awarded the Special Certificate of Commendation for 2014. This certificate acknowledges the great contribution that you have made over many years towards the conservation of Australia's fauna.'" Denis responded to Noel saying, "I would be delighted to accept the award... Unfortunately I will be in WA on the night of the ceremony, monitoring my black cockatoo population that week." Denis then asked

if I (DL) would mind accepting the award on his behalf. Now to some details.

Denis Saunders has published: 3 books (one with two editions); 75 peer-reviewed journal papers; 51 chapters in books; 54 articles in local or non-peer-reviewed journals; 7 reports, and edited 11 books. Denis also noted: "I have published 4 papers/book reviews in *Australian Zoologist* and have chapters in 4 proceedings of the RZSNSW (Future of fauna in western NSW; Conserving biodiversity; Community and research-based conservation; and Conservation of Australia's forest fauna)." It is good to see the link over the years between productive scientists and the publications of the Royal Zoological Society of NSW.

Denis Saunders then captured his life as follows: "I started with CSIRO in 1968 as a junior Experimental Officer and retired in 2002 as a Chief Research Scientist. I have attached a CV, which lists some of my appointments and international and national awards as well as the full publication list. [Absorbing reading, but not totally germane to the Whitley Awards, so not repeated here.] I worked closely with Ivor Beatty in editing books and supporting *Pacific Conservation Biology*, from discussing his plans for such a journal to the present."

Denis' publications include not only influential scientific papers, such as the landmark review on biological consequences of ecosystem fragmentation (co-authored with Richard Hobbs and Chris Margules), but also authoritative handbooks for the general reader such as 'Birds of Rottmest Island.'

Denis' mentoring is extensive, including the volunteers who have accompanied him on field trips, the students and lay people who have attended his public lectures and seminars and the graduate students who have benefitted from his guidance as a co-supervisor or examiner. He has also held key roles with non-government organisations such as Earthwatch and WWF, contributing his trademark energy and passion for conservation in each case.

Dan Lunney, Chris Dickman and Mike Calver
RZS NSW councilors.

Denis Saunders prepared an acceptance statement, which was read on the evening of the Whitley presentations, and is published here in full.

I am delighted to have been awarded this Whitley Special Certificate of Commendation by the Royal Zoological Society of New South Wales for, as Noel Tait put it "the great contribution that you have made over many years towards the conservation of Australia's fauna." I am grateful to Dan Lunney for accepting on my behalf, as I am in Perth, having finished this afternoon the first of the two field trips I conduct each year to monitor a breeding population of the endangered Carnaby's Cockatoo in the northern wheatbelt of Western Australia. I first visited this population in September 1969 and since then I have monitored the population for 28 of the years between 1969 and now, including the last six years.

After completing my honours degree in Zoology at the ANU in December 1967, I joined CSIRO Division of Wildlife Research in Western Australia as a field biologist to study the ecology and behaviour of what was then

known as the White-tailed Black Cockatoo, which was a pest in apple and pear orchards and was legally classified as vermin and had a bounty on its bill in some shires. In fact there were two species of black cockatoo with white tails in southwestern Australia, and having sorted out the taxonomy of these white-tailed black cockatoos, I devoted my research attention to the short-billed form known as Carnaby's Cockatoo. The results of my research indicated that by the mid-1980s, as a result of extensive and rapid loss of breeding and feeding habitat because of clearing of native vegetation for broadscale agriculture, the species had disappeared from a third of its breeding range and was put on the state, national and international lists of endangered species. It is now a flagship species for nature conservation in Western Australia.

In addition to my research on the ecology and behaviour of Carnaby's Cockatoo and red-tailed black cockatoos during my research career with CSIRO, I worked on island bird communities, the impacts of development of broadscale agriculture on native bird communities and on state of the environment reporting on biodiversity.

In 1982, I attended an RAOU congress on Birds of Eucalypt Forests and Woodlands at the University of New England in Armidale. There I met Harry Recher. This meeting led to another aspect of my career, that of communications; that is, the critical importance of communicating science not only to our peers, but to anyone who would listen, and to the essential role of editors as the gateways to publication. My first experience of editing was working with Harry, Allen Keast and Hugh Ford on "Birds of Eucalypt Forests and Woodlands; Ecology, Conservation, Management" which was published by Surrey Beatty & Sons in 1985 and won a Whitley Award. Harry drove this book and through him I met and became a friend of the late Ivor E Beatty OAM, who needs no introduction to many in the audience tonight. Having an introduction to editing from these two masters, I went on to edit 11 books, including five in Surrey Beatty & Sons Nature Conservation series. The first two on the role of remnants of native vegetation and the role of corridors proved to be highly influential nationally and internationally. I also served as an editor with *Conservation Biology*, *Landscape and Urban Planning*, *Biological Conservation* and *Pacific Conservation Biology*. I still serve on *Pacific Conservation Biology* and on the editorial advisory boards of several international peer-reviewed journals, including *Biological Conservation*.

During my time as a research worker, reviewer and editor, I learned a great deal about communications from a wide range of people, many of whom I still keep in contact with. There are two things I learnt that are worth stating here. The first is that it matters not how many seminars or presentations at conferences one delivers, the work spoken about has not been finished until it has been published and made available to others to build on. The second is that, contrary to popular opinion, the role of the editor is not to prevent people publishing their work, it is to see that the work being published is put in the clearest light for others to follow.

Despite having retired from CSIRO 12 years ago, I am still an active field biologist, publishing my results

in peer-reviewed journals and summarising findings that have conservation management implications in publications more likely to be accessed by land managers. I am fortunate to have been able to work as a field biologist for most of my career in a way that was stimulating and fun, although most of my results have not provided much optimism for future conservation of Australia's avifauna. I have spent my research life cataloguing the decline of our bird communities and I would dearly like to see some major changes in the way we manage this country to prevent the further decline and loss of our unique biota.

In closing I would like to publicly thank my wife, Vee Saunders, who has supported me throughout my research career. Without her support I would not have received this recognition. I could not think of a more suitable person to accept this award on my behalf than Dan Lunney, a dedicated field biologist and inspirational editor from whom I have learned a great deal about communications.

Thank you all for honouring me with this special commendation from the Royal Zoological Society of New South Wales.

Denis Saunders

Whitley Certificates of Commendation

This year 14 books and one electronic guide were awarded Certificates of Commendation in the following categories:

Children's Reader

First Flight by David Miller: Working Title Press, April 2014, ISBN 9781921504570, \$24.99.

First flight tells the story of a young Yellow-bellied Glider, Joey, and his first adventure from the safety from his home in a tree hollow. He's lured out in the morning by all sorts of noises; the activity of kookaburras calling, honeyeaters feeding, cicadas and butterflies. Some cockatoos give him a scare and he falls, but instinctively opens his arms and makes a gentle flight to the ground.

But he's away from home and confronted by all sorts of wildlife – lyrebirds, blue tongue lizards, frogs and echidnas making all sorts of unfamiliar sounds. Yet just like his first flight, Joey knows what to do and keeps quiet and hidden till night falls and his parents call out and come to find him and return him home. With the confidence from the day's adventure, he's no longer a back rider on his mother - he now glides all on his own.

It's a lovely little book, written for preschool kids and with gorgeous pictures. I showed it to the kids in my street, 4-11 year olds who play in the back lane, and it was their first pick as the best kid's book. And every one I asked said

it was the pictures that made it a winner. The illustrations are wonderfully evocative of what the animals really look like, they're very accessible in their style, but accurate too, and places each in their environment - I can see kids trying to recreate these images with their own coloured pencils.

I like it because it doesn't anthropomorphise much at all, it doesn't give the animals silly names or traits – it's simple and gentle but gives a lovely feel and look of everyday animals around in people's yards, giving a feel for their natural history. It would be a lovely story to read to younger kids too, with lots of the sounds animals make, their calls, their scratchings.

So for these reasons, I can see *First Flight* becoming a genuine favourite for preschool kids and it's a worthy winner of the Whitely Certificate of Commendation for the best Children's Reader.

Peter Banks

University of Sydney

Children's Story

The Little Corroboree Frog by Tracey Holton-Ramirez and Angela Ramirez: Magabala Books, 2013, ISBN 9781921248818, \$14.95.

This book is a wonderful and engaging story about the Southern Corroboree Frog, one of Australia's most endangered species. It has the most beautiful illustrations using vibrant colours and images to tell a compelling story.

The story is told from two perspectives, one through the eyes of a young boy and the other from the viewpoint of a little Corroboree Frog. This enabled interesting and different perspective to be explored and led to a rich conversation around the environment. One of the elements that I really enjoyed was how it is very positive in its message because it is very important that we are able to inspire hope in young readers despite the confronting challenges to the frog's habitat and population level. The book follows a very effective engagement approach, the

reader is connected to the story by the characters (boy and frog) and amazing illustrations. The reader learns about some of the challenges the frog is facing and finally the reader understands the type of actions that can help this stunning frog. The underlying message is that we are lucky to have such wonderful animals around us and to keep them safe we need to do our bit! The challenges facing the Corroboree Frog are significant but they can be alleviated through help, so the young boy does his bit by reducing litter in the ponds (they collect quite an amount) and by being very careful around the ponds edges.

Ultimately that is the key to why this book is so good, it celebrates a beautiful frog species but also encourages accessible actions and shows the reader they can help

animals. The book also promotes inquiry thinking as it describes the young boy's learning journey and as we all know there can never be enough critical thinking especially in the area of environmental science.

I found the book a great read and my young children agreed, this is the ultimate test and most important feedback! I also asked our head Corroboree Frog keeper Michael McFadden about the latest status of the Corroboree Frog as the program he is involved in is at the heart of this species recovery. By the way, I told him the context of the request, to award this book a prize, and he informed me he has already bought a copy and his young family also enjoy it. That is a wonderful endorsement.

The sad news is the challenges to the Southern Corroboree Frog are significant and its current status

is not great. There are only 50 left in the wild, with chytrid fungus having huge impacts. There has been no breeding recorded in the wild for the last two years and trials with artificial quarantined breeding stations have begun hopefully with good news to come. The good news is that zoos like Taronga have become very good at breeding them – Taronga has released 2000 back to the wild, if we can get the foothold back in the wild it can turn around. This is why this book is so important, if ever a species needed to be highlighted and talked about it is the Southern Corroboree Frog and I really hope that kids in the future will still be able to discover them in the wild. If we all follow the book's advice and all do our bit I feel encouraged that this can be achieved.

Paul Maquire
Taronga Park Zoo

Children's Book

***Big Red Kangaroo* by Claire Saxby and illustrated by Graham Byrne: Walker Books Australia, Aug 2013, ISBN 9781921720420, \$27.95.**

Claire and Graham have produced a fascinating children's book about a mob of Red Kangaroos, with a fast-moving story coupled with some great facts and beautiful illustrations.

The story is about the dominant male kangaroo Red (who, as the title suggests, is a Red Kangaroo). It is about how he leads his mob through the night and about how they keep away from predators, find food and water and how the male kangaroos fight each other for dominance. It also explains in detail how the other animals, such as thorny devils, hopping mice and wallabies interact with each other. The author describes kangaroo behaviour very well.

This book is cleverly written. For each part of the story, there is a paragraph of relevant facts about Red Kangaroos. This is an excellent idea because they tell you things you may not have originally known, such as Red Kangaroos get most of the water they need from plants. They also explain in further detail some facts about what you just read. For example, when Red faces off another male and stands up with his shoulders back, it tells you

that male Red Kangaroos weigh as much as 90 kg and reach 180 cm tall when standing. This information is printed in different fonts so you don't get confused when reading the story. The language of the story is complex but easy to understand.

The illustrations in this book are absolutely stunning. Everything about them is amazing from the way the shadows are painted to the look of the kangaroos' habitat – it really looks like a desert. The illustrations of the animals are true to life and incredibly detailed. One of my favourite illustrations is of the two male kangaroos fighting each other in front of the moon. Another outstanding illustration is the kangaroos drinking from puddles, but they were all great.

This book has been written for kids from the age of 7-12 years old. I think they will enjoy it as much as I have. Congratulations to Claire and Graham.

Leo Haythornthwaite
Year 8, Sydney Secondary College, Balmain

Children's Series

***Steve Parish Story Books: Sneaky Stick Insects, Boris the Beetle, Crazy Crickets, Cassie the Caterpillar, Nifty Native Bees, Dragonfly Dance, The Mosquitoes' Book of Dirty Tricks, Stella the Silkworm, Max the Mealworm and Doug the Dung Beetle* by Rebecca Johnson: Pascal Press, Jan 2014, ISBN 9781922225283, 9781922225290, 9781922225276, 9781922123794, 9781922123831, 9781922225269, 9781922123848, 9781922123824, 9781922123817 and 9781922123800, \$5.95.**

When I picked up the first somewhat unassuming volume in the Steve Parish Story Book Series, I was hardly prepared for the almost immediate impression that this was exceptional writing for a young audience. In fact any audience and as you can see I am not young. But I was impressed. I do have to admit that the first volume I examined was about dung beetles. Now if I have a soft spot for any living creature it is for dung beetles. I of course am not alone in this. The ancient Egyptians

venerated them by holding them in charge of moving the sun across the sky. But apart from the charismatic subject matter, the text combines an almost poetic lyrical style with a straightforward scientific message. The books do two things and they do both very well indeed. They teach children to read and they inform children about natural history. As part of this dual function, the glossary includes words like dung, maggot and pupa along with overheard, poke fun at and stomped. There is much humour in the

stories as well. The obvious humour in the dung beetle volume would really appeal to young children like me because it is about poop. But the other volumes are all just as interesting and funny.

If I had read the inside of the front and back covers before plunging into the text, I would have realized that the author is a professional communicator. She is an award winning primary school science teacher with over 50 books to her name.

The front cover has notes for the teacher to flesh out the information contained in the text. It also shows where each volume fits into the Australian curriculum both for reading levels and science topics.

The ten volumes in this Series are all on spineless animals.

I am a spineless biologist. Over 95% of all animals do not have a vertebral column. So I realize that I may be just that little bit biased in my appreciation of these books.

It is not only the text that is impressive, so are the images. Nerinda Sandry has contributed many of these. She certainly lives up to the name of Steve Parish.

I said before that while the covers may be somewhat unassuming, so is the cost at \$6 a pop. I can envisage the class having multiple copies of these books and each child can be given their own to read aloud. What a treat!!

Congratulations to Rebecca Johnson and all those at Pascal Press for these treasures.

Noel Tait

Macquarie University

Field Guide

***A Guide to the Cockroaches of Australia* by David Rentz: CSIRO Publishing, May 2014, ISBN 9780643103207, \$49.95.**

When you say the word 'cockroach' to most people – both in Australia and the rest of the world – they tend to only think of a very few species. These are the species they imagine living in the sewers, under the kitchen sink, or the bathroom cupboard. In short they think of the pest species - the ones associated with poor sanitation and spoiled food. In truth most of these are NOT natives to this country and their true origins are difficult to trace – often being linked to produce brought in to the UK from another country – which gives us common names like 'German Cockroach' which in Germany is called the "Russian Cockroach" and in Russia the 'Prussian Cockroach' which most probably calls Africa its original home. Little wonder that the species, like this with economic impact, get all the attention and are quite well studied - even if their origins are poorly known - while the fact that we have about 520 native species is utterly unknown to most Australians who if they do hear about native cockroaches usually remark 'I've got a load of them in my kitchen!' The word 'cockroach' has so many bad connotations it has been suggested several times that we call them something else (I saw a semi-factual mockumentary once that suggested we call them Attenboroughs so you could say there was a colony of Attenboroughs living under the sink!).

They are almost ignored as a group even by most entomologists and usually get little more than a relatively brief mention and coverage in natural history books. In truth, as you will see in this wonderful book, Australia has an impressive diversity of cockroach species, including quite a few cave dwelling ones. We have in Australia the most cave-adapted species known. *Nocticola flabella* is totally blind and the only sclerotised and pigmented parts are the mouth and genitalia! We are also an unusual country in having quite a few diurnal species and – if you are out during the day and protected by noxious scent glands it pays to advertise - so we have some truly beautiful cockroaches in metallic colours and patterns. An example

of just HOW rivetingly, eye-catching these insects can be can be shown by us once being sent at the enquiry section of The Australian Museum an image of *Polyzosteria viridissima*, the Alpine Day Cockroach in shining metallic green, filling the screen. The question was:

"What species of snake is this in the image?" I was more than a little confused but the question went on." I photographed this Alpine Cockroach the other day and only noticed the snake in the same image when I got home". Sure enough in the upper left hand corner of the image a section of snake was visible – quite a large snake from the size of the scales – it was a Death Adder and I imagine the photographer's face was quite close to it yet neither he, nor I, noticed it on first glance as our attention was taken by the beauty of the Alpine Cockroach.

This group of insects has walked the Earth little changed since before the days of the dinosaurs. They are close relatives of the mantids and termites and David Rentz's book has finally put cockroaches in the prominence they deserve. As he says "There is nothing like it for any other cockroach fauna anywhere in the world."

It truly is unique and it is full of very good colour images of much of the Australian cockroach fauna – most of them of living specimens. It contains information on how to collect and preserve cockroaches, how to keep them alive and display them, and of course has detailed notes on the individual species including – where known – their ecology and habitat. It has a section on past entomologists who worked on cockroaches and much more. It is a good foundation or starting point for anyone wanting to study Australian cockroach biology and systematics, as well as a field guide for the naturalist and bushwalker. All in all a well deserved winner of a Whitley Commendation.

Martyn Robinson

The Australian Museum

Regional Field Guide

***Butterflies: Identification and Life History* by Ross Field: Museum Victoria, Sept 2013, ISBN 9781921833090, \$29.95.**

Butterflies: Identification and Life History, by Ross Field is one of the best books on Australian butterflies ever written. As a regional guide to the butterflies of Victoria, it allows for much more focus and detail than a general national guide and in so doing also beautifully showcases special southern Australian endemic groups, which are often overshadowed by gaudy tropical species in other books.

Although it deals with only Victoria's butterflies it still treats an impressive 128 species – which may be compared for example with the 122 species known from Finland, circa 140 from Germany and just 60 from the UK. It is a substantial work by any standard. The book could also serve as a field guide to butterflies of all of southeastern Australia, southeast of a line drawn between Adelaide and Sydney as only a few species, generally very rare, occur within this larger area but not in Victoria.

The text is written in a clear, simple, yet authoritative prose, which is often highly evocative. The author's passion is clearly communicated to the reader. The overall design is very well organised. Each species is afforded a full opening employing a novel and highly effective illustrative protocol, in which museum specimens of adults are shown alongside living butterflies and in

most cases complete illustrations of the early stages, namely eggs, larvae and pupae. The near comprehensive depiction of early stages, including wonderful auto-montage egg photographs, sets this book apart from all photographic field guides previously published on the Australian fauna. The inclusion of photographs of living adults creates a nice link between the diagnostic museum specimens, the living larvae, and in addition thumbnail illustrations of host plants and habitats. These latter are another first, which greatly enhances the appeal of the book. One must admire the dedication, passion and sheer hard work, which must have gone into assembling such a comprehensive collection of photographs. It is the work of a lifetime.

The book has excellent instructions on making a collection. It is the ideal first book for the younger reader (or the young at heart) beginning a serious interest in butterflies. It will also find a welcome place on the library shelves of every serious Lepidopterist in Australia. I warmly congratulate Ross Field on this signal achievement, a book most deserving of a Whitley Commendation

Albert Orr
Griffith University

Electronic Field Guide

***Wetland Birds Field Guide (iOS)* ed. Neil Shelley: BirdLife Australia, May 2013, \$Free**

The team at Birdlife Australia has produced a superb guide to the wetland birds of southeastern Australia, as an app (for tablets and smartphones). This easy-to-use and extremely well designed app will be of substantial benefit to anyone who is interested in the bird life they see around them, from beginners and interested observers through to full-blood twitchers.

This app is really simple to use, and is very easy to navigate through when using for the first time. Once the app is launched, the user is presented with a list of wetland bird groups (e.g. migratory shorebirds) that split down to sub-groups (e.g. large sandpipers, small sandpiper, snipe) with species listed within each category. In all, 63 species are described. By tapping on the individual species, information about that bird is displayed in a choice of formats – information only, picture only or both.

Each species is superbly illustrated by drawings and photos of birds on land, on water and in flight. The text is comprehensive and relevant – it details distinctive markings, identifying characteristics, behaviour, species

similar in appearance, habitat. Each species description also includes a graphic showing relative size, a distribution map of the species, endangered status and taxonomy. There is also a link to the Birdlife Australia on-line species accounts for even more information. Click at the top of the screen and you can play a recording of the bird's call.

Overall, the editors and contributors of this app have produced a valuable tool that collates a lot of information into a very accessible and visually appealing resource. It is a pleasure to use, and I expect it will become popular among many established and aspiring birdos. Importantly, this free app will make information about wetland birds accessible to a wide audience, many of who may be finding out about our wetland birds for the first time. This can only have positive outcomes regarding the ongoing conservation and management of our wetland birds. Personally, I hope that the Birdlife Australia team will now create an app to cover the rest of Australia's birds.

Adele Haythornthwaite
University of Sydney

Natural History

***Fur Seals and Sea Lions* by Roger Kirkwood and Simon Goldsworthy: CSIRO Publishing, June 2013, ISBN 9780643096929, \$39.95.**

The rapid development of technology that we have seen over the past two decades particularly with micro processors, digital cameras, accelerometers, GPS trackers and in genetics has been reflected in the increase in our

knowledge of fur seals and sea lions. We now know so much more about what these animals do at sea.

Fur Seals and Sea Lions is a timely contribution in that it gives us up to date information about seals in Australia

derived from research that has used the latest advances in remote recording technology, such as dive recorders, GPS trackers, miniature cameras and genetic analysis to understand the role of these important predators in the marine system.

This is a well-written book, easy to understand for anyone who is interested in seals and sea lions, it covers what these animals do on land (reproductive biology), and what they do at sea (foraging ecology). It also gives us up to date information on the population status of the three species that breed in Australia – Australian Sea Lions, Australian Fur Seals and New Zealand Fur Seals. The book also looks

at the current status of the populations of these species and presents some of the major known threats to populations and possible future management issues. I am sure this book will be useful to a range of readers from those with a general interest in seals to undergraduate students and professional researchers and wildlife managers.

The authors have many years of experience working with these animals, not only as researchers but working in conservation and management and this is reflected in the quality of the writing in this book.

Dave Slip
Taronga Park Zoo

Zoological Management and Conservation Resource

Climate Change Adaptation Plan for Birds eds. Stephen Garnett and Donald Franklin: CSIRO Publishing, May 2014, 9780643108028, \$69.95.

There's no getting away from it – it's been a grim year for climate change action in Australia. And although this book won't make you feel any better, it provides a very tangible perspective of what we are up against.

This resource is more than an action plan for birds. It provides a clear and well-argued review of the issues we should be considering for all fauna when thinking about climate change adaptation. The literature review is comprehensive and, while emphasising Australian studies, it makes due reference to global studies where they provide stronger evidence than available from Australia.

The book has four main chapters, explaining the key terms of "exposure", "sensitivity" and "vulnerability", before providing response options to promote conservation in the face of climate change. The remaining two thirds of the book provides "adaptation profiles" for 60 species that are both highly sensitive and highly exposed. These

examples reinforce the ideas explained in the preliminary chapters as well as offering an action plan for the bird species most at risk.

Management options include prescriptions that will benefit a range of fauna, such as expanding protected areas, improving habitat quality, protecting refugia, increasing connectivity and creating new habitat; as well as prescriptions for intensive management, such as translocation, genetic enhancement, managing other threats, and captive breeding. It all depends upon the species and the specific nature of the threat.

Some of these approaches are controversial both in terms of ethics and costs, but by providing tangible examples of species where each approach can be justified, the book makes a strong case for a multi-faceted response.

Richard Major
The Australian Museum

Periodical

Australian Birdlife ed. Sean Dooley: Birdlife Australia, Sept. 2013, 2200-0127, \$12.95.

Birds hold a special place and fascination for many with an interest in animals. Birds are the first animals that we really observed as children. Growing up in the UK during the 70s, I was a member of the Young Ornithologists Club and it was birds that stimulated a lot of my initial interest in animals. Birds are relatively easy to observe, we see them all around us, their behaviour is interesting, they are diverse and they are spectacular.

For many people, that childhood interest continues into adulthood – for some birds will form the centre of their career, such as in research, conservation or even publishing – for others birds remain simply a lifelong passion or hobby. For some, it is a passion that develops later in life often in retirement. I can't think of another group of animals that captures the interest of such a broad range of people.

Australian Birdlife is a periodical, published quarterly that aims at a readership across that broad spectrum of interests.

To give you some examples, it has articles that would appeal to:

- Researchers: providing profiles of researchers and their work
- Conservationists: detailing projects of note many of which Birdlife Australia are involved with
- Twitchers: including where to see those hard to find species or what birds to expect in different locations
- Casual birdwatchers: for example, how to create a bird-friendly garden.

All with an interest in birds seem to be catered for in the magazine, but in such a way that all the articles will likely appeal to all readers.

One aspect I find particularly interesting is interviews with public faces that happen to be avid birdwatchers. A few examples include, Rosemary Balmford (The first female judge appointed to the Victorian Supreme Court), John Clarke (From ABC TV the Clarke and Dawe interviews) and Peter Doherty (The Nobel prize winning immunologist).

Sean Dooley is the editor. He is clearly passionate about

birds and is well respected by the readership. He knows his readership, and can speak to them as one of them.

As you would expect from a publication produced by Birdlife Australia, the magazine is full of stunning images of birds – These are set off beautifully by the overall high quality of the publication.

Australian Birdlife was first published in 2012 – it was commended last year, its second year of publication, in the

Whitley Awards and this is now the second year in a row that it receives the award.

So my congratulations to Sean Dooley, and the publishing team at Birdlife Australia, and their contributors, for creating what has rapidly become an outstanding zoological periodical.

Martin Predavec
President, RZS NSW

Taxonomic Zoology

***Australian Beetles: Morphology, Classification and Keys Vol. I* by John Lawrence and Adam Slipinski: CSIRO Publishing, Oct. 2013, ISBN 9780643097285, \$195.**

This book has its origin in the beetle chapters by Ev Britton in CSIRO's *Insects of Australia* (1970: 127 pages), John Lawrence & Britton (1991: 141 pages), and the book by Lawrence & Britton (1994: 192 pages). But the current volume is a quantum leap beyond: full descriptions of all families, lists of genera, new keys to adults and larvae, in depth discussion of fossils and many more illustrations. It is also the first of 3 volumes, which will provide keys to, illustrations of and short synopses of all the genera of beetles in Australia. My only complaint is that the plates are scattered through the text and hard to find.

The expertise of Lawrence & Slipinski, allowing them to write such a complex and information packed volume,

does not come lightly. It is due to an enlightened government providing a permanent position for beetle research and funds for extending that research and accumulating the most comprehensive beetle collection in Australia, at CSIRO Canberra. Hopefully this support will continue - there are an estimated 50,000 species in Australia, so plenty of work to be done.

The authors and publishers are to be congratulated on a solid densely packed tome, which provides the footing for future research on Australian beetles.

Chris Reid
The Australian Museum

Historical Zoology

***The Woodhen: A Flightless Island Bird Defying Extinction* by Clifford Frith: CSIRO Publishing, June 2013, ISBN 9780643108707, \$59.95.**

This book reflects an obsession, a grand obsession, with one small bird on one small island. The dedication in the book (p vii) foreshadows that preoccupation with this "stout, bantam-sized, ground-dwelling, island-confined bird" (p viii). The book is dedicated to a number of people, but first to The Woodhen. What is so absorbing for me, as a reader, and I'm sure a great many others whose lives have intersected with this bird and Lord Howe Island, is the intense focus on the bird. The first human name in the dedication is John Disney. John was a long-term member of the council of the Royal Zoological Society. I first met John in the early 1970s at The Australian Museum, when I worked with Harry Recher. He was then working on a survey of the Lord Howe Island fauna, so I heard about the woodhen from both John and Harry. I was at John's funeral earlier this year. We had talked regularly over more than 40 years, and the woodhen was part of many conversations. I looked at the drafts of his MS for the woodhen many years ago, and now it is great to see that it has not been lost, it is incorporated into Frith's encyclopaedic book on the woodhen. This also includes John's long-term friend and colleague Peter Fullagar. On p 86 there is a photo of Disney and Fullagar, with my NSW National Parks and Wildlife colleague Alan Morris. The photo is undated, but it looks to be early 1970s. The fine photo is by Ed Slater, another long-term friend of Disney and Fullagar. As chance would have it, I was invited to help on a Lord Howe Island woodhen trip in the very early 1970s, but NPWS sent Alan instead. He was the

NPWS ornithologist, and I was an education officer, a role more given to talking than researching. In the late 1970s, my immediate fellow researcher at NPWS, Ben Miller, went to Lord Howe Island for two years. One of my tasks was to help Ben with equipment, and various other administrative matters. I followed the pig story and 'the get up place' in great detail (p 82-83). I was kept up to date regularly about Glen Fraser's breeding success. Later, I had a great deal to do with another NPWS colleague, Bob Harden (Robert in Frith's book), and we swapped lots of rat stories and the difficulties of their control. I followed the plot in great detail with another of my long-term research colleagues David Priddel. Last week I went to David's retirement dinner. We talked about the rats on Lord Howe Island.

Some may think that Clifford Frith is obsessed, but from my viewpoint, he is part of a magnificent parade of equally obsessed individuals, and I daresay I am in that company. I have never been to Lord Howe Island, I have never seen the woodhen, but I do know a lot about the people who know about the woodhen. In 2013, as I was driving to work, I heard Frith being interviewed on ABC about his book. The interview started as I was about to get out of my car. Instead of getting out of my car, I sat and listened to the long interview in full, the woodhen is part of my world.

So, unsurprisingly, I was most happy when Noel Tait, chair of the Whitley committee, asked me to review the book for the Whitley awards. Noel was struck by the intense detail, including the huge appendix on the results of

the breeding program (152-188), but this is only a brief summary compared with what I have read and heard. It is thus a delight to have all this information compressed into one book. It is an act of dedication. It is a book richly deserving of this award. It justifies a single species approach. It is an absorbing subject, but it does require a special interest in the odd world of island life, both people

and wildlife. However, there is a good list of such people, and they will all appreciate the contribution of this book, its 26 photos or illustrations of the woodhen, or people with woodhens, and the careful text. Congratulations to Clifford Frith for this award of Historical Zoology.

Dan Lunney

Council member, Royal Zoological Society of NSW

Marine Ecology

***Ecology of Australian Temperate Reefs* eds. Scoresby Shepherd and Graham Edgar: CSIRO Publishing, Oct 2013, ISBN 9781486300099, \$130.**

Ecology of Australian Temperate Reefs is an extensively researched book. Although specific to Australian temperate reefs, the authors have successfully covered all aspects of ecology by using functional groupings and key examples.

Previous reviews of this book state that it is aimed at people from elsewhere in the world wanting to learn about and compare Australian temperate reefs with other regions. But as a marine ecologist working on temperate reefs in Australia, this book seems very applicable to my research. I think it has extra relevance due to the way the authors have put everything in a clear geographic, and zoological or botanical context, and their clever use of examples makes you realise that you have frequently seen many of these species and habitats.

The book is split into five distinct parts. Starting from the beginning of the Southern Ocean 80-10 million years ago, and finishing with current issues of conservation and management.

The first part is concerned with history, climate, oceanography and biogeography. Specifically, the reasons for why we have such high endemism and richness of species. For example, we have the longest stretch of an east west coast in the Southern Hemisphere. The historic context in which this book is set also provides a nice background for predicting consequences of anthropogenic increases in $p\text{CO}_2$ leading to higher sea temperatures, rising sea levels, and changes in wind patterns and ocean currents.

The second part, dedicated to algae, is split into four chapters based on their functional roles. Starting with kelp, it provides details on the dominant species *Ecklonia radiata*, and also the giant kelp *Macrocystis* as a foundation species. This is then followed by the fucoids, which have been studied in terms of the IDH, patch development and competition. The non-geniculate coralline algae and rhodoliths form another chapter, which focuses on their role as urchin barrens and their interactions with canopy forming algae and invertebrates. As with all sections, examples from the literature and informative graphs and diagrams are good. The final chapter is on the turfing algae. Links are provided between the turfing algae and other species due to their interactions. The table of factors influencing their abundance is also a nice summary.

The third part is on the invertebrates, which are an extremely diverse and abundant component of marine rocky reef assemblages. This part is split into eight chapters according to their functional roles and links with primary producers. The first chapter groups the meiofauna

and macrofauna. This section could have been massive but the authors have managed to keep it short, mention a few key species, and talk about more general processes such as grazing and predation. After the meiofauna and macrofauna chapter, there is one on molluscan megafauna. This includes the ecological aspect of grazing by limpets, chitons and the commercially important turban snails and abalone, and also predatory gastropods. It also includes a section dear to my heart, on the habitat forming bivalves such as mussels. There are also chapters on the interesting and ecologically important cephalopods and echinoderms. More specifically, the effects of urchins on benthic habitats has its own chapter due to the important role they play in determining the presence of different stable states. There is a chapter on sessile fauna including sponges, ascidians and bryozoans. This includes the iconic sponge gardens and their importance in benthic-pelagic coupling and also in terms of ecological theories of competition and succession. There are additional chapters on cnidarians and larger crustaceans such as sea spiders and barnacles. The latter provides extensive information on commercially important species such as lobsters.

The fourth part is on marine vertebrates, again split up into chapters on bottom feeding fish, planktivorous and large reef associated carnivorous fish, and the marine mammals. Iconic bottom feeding fish and their ecological roles are covered, including toadfish, syngnathids, leatherjackets and blue groper. Also the pelagic fish such as snapper, kingfish, barracouta, sharks and trevally. This part also covers the important conservation issues such as the loss of apex predators, and it leads nicely to the final part.

The fifth part is on marine ecosystems and their conservation, covering ideas about communities and assemblages, food webs, fishing and conservation, and management in terms of MPAs. I particularly liked the summary table on the threats to kelp forests, rocky reefs and oyster reefs.

It is a book that I can recommend to undergraduate and postgraduate university students. For example, many of the chapters are the focus for lectures I have recently given to Aquatic Ecology students and also Coastal Management students. More importantly, I found it to be a really interesting read, and it provided our group at UWS with some good ideas and inspiration for future research.

Vicky Cole

University of Western Sydney

Aquatic Biology

Living Waters by Nick Romanowski: CSIRO Publishing, Oct. 2013, ISBN 9780643107564, \$39.95.

When people talk about ecosystems they often deal with them as fixed systems- that is, they have a set number of organisms that interact in a particular way. The interactions are usually obvious- either species A eats species B, competes with species B, parasitises species B or simply ignores it.

It is simplistic to think of ecosystems because many ecosystems are not fixed but are in a constant state of change. When these changes take place, what relationships still apply? What are now the determining factors in the ecosystem? Now that the system has changed, what strategies do the inhabitants of the ecosystem have available to deal with this change?

Living Waters tackles the ecology of freshwater environments. Some environments are relatively stable and simple, such as deep-water lakes and large rivers; but most are in constant change and may even be short-lived or ephemeral. Despite these differences each ecosystem supports a range of resident species, all of which interact in some way at some time.

To explain the dynamics of such complicated and variable environments is not easy and can become bogged down in all the “ifs” and “whens” of the situation. Nick Romanowski has dived into this maelstrom to guide the reader through the apparent disorder and explains that there are rules that operate and direct the outcome of each encounter. In short, he gives sense to a world of apparent chaos. He does this in a very easy and non-condescending manner.

Nick's method is simple: he treats it as a play. In the first chapters of the book he introduces all of the main characters.

They may be elegant birds or miniscule ostracods. He describes their lives, their challenges and the special skills that they possess to survive. In this way, we are introduced to the birds, mammals, reptiles, frogs, invertebrates and plants that thrive in freshwater environments.

In the later chapters of the book, the characters are allowed to play out a particular drama, be it in a freshly flooded lake, a drying waterhole or a hot and humid tropical swamp.

Nick Romanowski has drawn from a number of credible reference sources for his information. From these he has built up the character profile of his cast and then allows the play to proceed. If the play changes, new characters may appear, others may migrate away, seek shelter beneath the ground or simply die. The account is riveting.

The myriad interactions that are possible in dynamic freshwater environments make *Living Waters* such a good read. The text is peppered with information panels and each page usually has at least one colour photo of the environment or one of the animals within it. For the layperson, it is a delight. It is factually up to date yet not stuffy or esoteric. It bridges the gap between the austere field science and the need to tell an important story.

The book is littered with examples of Australian ecosystems and freshwater habitats.

Living Waters is an excellent interpretation of Australia freshwater environments and is a delight to read. It is a worthy winner of a Whitley commendation.

Arthur White
Ecological Consultant

Reference Text

Neurobiology of Monotremes: Brain Evolution in our Distant Mammalian Cousins ed. Ken Ashwell: CSIRO Publishing, Dec. 2013, ISBN 9780643103115, \$280.

We know the monotremes as those strange, distinctively Australian mammals that lay eggs but still produce milk for their newly hatched young. We know that they diverged from other mammals at a very early stage, perhaps as far back as the Jurassic when mammals as a group were just starting to get going. And we may sometimes view them as somehow primitive, the last remnants of an evolutionary experiment that has come down to just a small handful of living species. This book – *Neurobiology of Monotremes* – acknowledges and celebrates the distinctiveness and eccentricities of the monotremes, but it also shows them to be a remarkable mix of primitive and advanced characteristics that allow them to successfully exploit their freshwater and terrestrial environments. Arguably, the Short-beaked Echidna has been able to persist and thrive more effectively in the modern Australian environment than any other mammal – certainly, it has the largest distribution of any species. *Neurobiology of Monotremes* shows that the brain and nervous system of these egg-laying mammals are highly specialised and are a key part

of the package of adaptations that allow the Platypus and echidnas to so successfully exploit their respective environments.

The book opens with a chapter by Anne Musser on the classification and evolution of the monotremes and a second chapter on monotreme behaviour and ecology by Stewart Nicol. These chapters provide excellent background on where the monotremes have come from and how they make a living. The book then goes on to present a hugely impressive wealth of detail on the embryology, development and structure of the brain and peripheral nervous system of the monotremes, and it also provides outstanding syntheses of research – much of it by the authors – on the structure and function of the different sensory systems, and on the evolution of sleep. There is of course a detailed treatment on what we know about the extraordinary electrosensory system of monotremes, a system that marks them as being different, again, from other mammals. The final three

chapters present detailed atlases of the anatomy of the peripheral nervous system, brain and spinal cord of both the Platypus and Short-beaked Echidna. If you want to see how these animals develop, and how they compare with their marsupial and placental counterparts, this book provides not just the only source of information to do so, but by far the most detailed and comprehensive source of information that has been assembled.

Only four authors contributed to the book, and this gives it a more consistent feel than most edited volumes where there may be dozens of authors. The editor, Ken Ashwell, has authored or co-authored 15 of the book's 17 chapters, three of them with Craig Hardman and one with Anne Musser, and in so doing has contributed

almost 500 pages to the book. Each chapter has clear line drawings or annotated photographs to illustrate key parts of the text and, if you are not familiar with monotreme neuroanatomy, this provides a very helpful navigation guide.

All up, this is a masterly volume that should be of great use to students, research scientists and anyone interested in the structure and function at the neurobiological level of our distant mammalian cousins. *Neurobiology of Monotremes* is a very worthy winner of the Best Reference Text, and it gives me great pleasure to present the award to Ken Ashwell and CSIRO Publishing.

Chris Dickman
University of Sydney

Conservation Zoology

***Sugar and Sand: The World of the Honey Possum* by Ron and Sue Wooller: Swanbrae Press, Oct 2013, ISBN 9780987577108, Oct. 2013, \$22.00**

Sugar and Sand: the World of the Honey Possum stands out for four reasons. 1. Reflecting original studies by the authors over decades in southwestern Australia. It is rare to see such fruitful, long-term work in an era of pressure for short-term studies and quick publications. 2. 'Completion of the loop' - the authors have published extensively in the journal literature and have now added the vital extra of an accessible book for general readers. 3. The subject matter is vital for transmitting a conservation message in Western Australia. It shows that *Banksia* woodland in southwestern WA is not simply bush to clear for agriculture or urbanisation, but a vibrant ecosystem hosting remarkable fauna supported by diverse flora - all supported by nutrient-poor soils. Climate change and introduced plant pathogens are also shown as threats. Few other popular works deliver the fauna conservation message based on such a compelling ecosystem-based approach. 4. The production qualities are high. The superb photographs, clear graphs and accessible text make this an attractive, authoritative and informative book.

Sugar and Sand is a neat account of the life of *Tarsipes rostratus* (we don't meet its scientific name until p 14 of a 110 page book). Although it is a highly academic work, it has been written in a format that is very readable and appealing. The book has lots of photos and anecdotes about the Honey Possum, highlighting that it is an animal

with a precarious life style – it lives in the high-energy lane and depends on harvesting a high-energy resource in an otherwise very dangerous and hostile environment. It is a sympathetic account of the life of this small but unusual marsupial. It has a long reference list but, most of all, it is an interesting read.

Sugar and Sand: the World of the Honey Possum is a rare combination of fascinating scientific information and a colourful and engaging presentation. Nectar is an abundant and distinctive resource in the Australian environment that whole suites of different animals have adapted to exploit. The Honey Possum is one of the few mammals (the others are bats) that are fully specialised to a diet of nectar and pollen. How they do this makes for an intriguing story.

Of course, one's editorial eye does not stop at the quality of the writing, or the great photos by Jiri and Marie Lochman. On p 91 there is a great reference to Ellis Troughton's 1922 paper on the Honey Mouse in *Australian Zoologist*. With this Whitley Award in 2014, it is yet another neat piece of co-operation between the Royal Zoological Society of NSW and the honey possum, its science and its conservation.

Mike Calver, Arthur White, Brad Law and Dan Lunney
Royal Zoological Society of NSW Councillors

For further information contact

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2014 Whitley Awards

The Australian Museum, Friday 12 September 2014



Children's Reader. *First Flight* by David Miller; published by Working Title Press. Award presenter Peter Banks on left, David Miller on right. Photo by Ricky Spencer.



Children's Story. *The Little Corroboree Frog* by Tracey Holton-Ramirez and Angela Ramirez published by Magabala Books. Award presenter Paul Maguire, with convenor Noel Tait on left. Photo by Ricky Spencer.



Children's Book. *Big Red Kangaroo* by Claire Saxby and illustrated by Graham Byrne, published by Walker Books. Award presenter Leo Haythornthwaite, right, with Nicola Robinson of Walker Books. Photo by Ricky Spencer.

Whitely Awards 2014



Children's Series. *Dragonfly Dance*, *Sneaky Stick Insects*, *Crazy Crickets*, *Cassie the Caterpillar*, *Nifty Native Bees*, *Max the Mealworm*, *Stella the Silkworm*, *The Mosquitoes' Book of Dirty Tricks*, *Boris the Beetle* and *Doug the Dung Beetle* by Rebecca Johnson, Steve Parish Story Books, published by Pascal Press. Award accepted by Rebecca Johnson, Nerida Sandry and Lyn Dickinson,, award presenter Noel Tait on left. Photo by Dan Lunney.



Field Guide. *A Guide to the Cockroaches of Australia* by David Rentz, published by CSIRO Publishing. Award presenter Martyn Robinson, with Julia Stuthe of CSIRO. Photo by Dan Lunney.



Regional Field Guide. *Butterflies: Identification and Life History* by Ross Field, published by Museum Victoria. Award presenter Albert Orr on left, Ross Field on right. Photo by Dan Lunney.

Whitely Awards 2014



Electronic Field Guide. *Wetland Birds Field Guide* ed. by Neil Shelley, produced by BirdLife Australia. Sean Dooley accepting the award from Adele Haythornthwaite, presenter. Photo by Dan Lunney.



Zoological Management and Conservation Resource. *Climate Change Adaptation Plan for Birds* eds. by Stephen Garnett and Donald Franklin, published by CSIRO Publishing. Award presenter Richard Major; left, with Julia Stuthe, CSIRO. Photo by Dan Lunney.



Periodical. *Australian Birdlife* ed. by Sean Dooley, published by Birdlife Australia. Award presenter Martin Predavec, left, with Sean Dooley. Photo by Dan Lunney.

Whitely Awards 2014



Taxonomic Zoology. *Australian Beetles: Morphology, Classification and Keys* by John Lawrence and Adam Slipinski, published by CSIRO Publishing. Award presenter Chris Reid on left, with Julia Stuthe, CSIRO. Photo by Dan Lunney.



Historical Zoology. *The Woodhen: A Flightless Island Bird Defying Extinction* by Clifford Frith, published by CSIRO Publishing. Julia Stuthe, CSIRO, Cliff Frith, and award presenter, Dan Lunney. Photo by Ricky Spencer.



Marine Ecology. *Ecology of Australian Temperate Reefs* eds. Scoresby Shepherd and Graham Edgar, published by CSIRO Publishing. Award presenter Vicky Cole, left, award accepted by Adrienne Grant (author of a chapter), with Julia Stuthe, CSIRO, right. Photo by Dan Lunney.



Aquatic Biology. *Living Waters* by Nick Romanowski, published by CSIRO Publishing. Award presenter, Arthur White, left, and Julia Stuthe, CSIRO. Photo by Dan Lunney.

Whitley Awards 2014



Reference Text. *Neurobiology of Monotremes: Brain Evolution in our Distant Mammalian Cousins* ed. by Ken Ashwell, published by CSIRO Publishing. Julia Stuthe, CSIRO, accepting the award, with award presenter Chris Dickman, left. Photo by Dan Lunney.



Neurobiology of Monotremes: Brain Evolution in our Distant Mammalian Cousins ed. by Ken Ashwell, published by CSIRO Publishing. Julia Stuthe, CSIRO, accepting the award, with award presenter Chris Dickman, left. Both Julia and Chris enjoying a light moment. Photo by Dan Lunney.



Conservation Zoology. Sugar and Sand: The World of the Honey Possum by Ron and Sue Wooller, published by Swanbrae Press. Ron Wooller, left, Sue Wooller, centre, and award presenter, Dan Lunney, left. Photo by Ricky Spencer.



Whitley Medal: *Tadpoles and Frogs of Australia* by Marion Anstis, published by New Holland. Award presenter, Arthur White, left, medal winner Marion Anstis. Photo by Dan Lunney.

Whitley Awards 2014



Whitley Medal: *Australian Longhorn Beetles (Coleoptera: Cerambycidae) Vol 1.* by Adam Slipinski and Hermes Escalona, published by ABRS and CSIRO Publishing. Award presenter Chris Reid, left, with Michael Preece, Alice Wells, centre, and Glynn Maynard with Julia Stuthe, CSIRO on right. Photo by Dan Lunney.



Special Commendation: For outstanding contributions towards the promotion of Australasian fauna and its conservation - Denis Saunders.

Denis Saunders, wearing a Birds Australia Carnaby's Black-Cockatoo Recovery Project shirt, is holding a Carnaby's Cockatoo nestling at Coomallo Creek in November 2009. (Photograph Katherine Howard, WWF-Australia).



The Whitley award evening at the Australian Museum 12 September 2014. RZS councillor Paul Maguire congratulating Whitley convenor Noel Tait in celebration of a great evening. Photo by Ricky Spencer.

Whitley Awards 2014



The Whitley award evening at the Australian Museum 12 September 2014. Whitley convenor, Noel Tait at the podium. Photo by Ricky Spencer.



The Whitley award evening at the Australian Museum 9 September 2014.

Photo by Ricky Spencer: Cliff Frith, right. Julia Stuthe, left.



The Whitley award evening at the Australian Museum 12 September 2014. RZS convenor Noel Tait at podium. Photo by Dan Lunney.



The Whitley award evening at the Australian Museum 12 September 2014. Photo by Dan Lunney. Awardees, award presenters, friends, RZS members and RZS councillors. Ricky Spencer on far right of photo, with camera.

Whitley Awards 2014



The Whitley award evening at the Australian Museum 12 September 2014. Award presenters. Adele and Leo Haythornthwaite. Photo by Dan Lunney.



The Whitley award evening at the Australian Museum 12 September 2014. Whitley medallist - Marion Anstis. Photo by Dan Lunney.